

BUSINESS STARTUP CHECKLIST

A roadmap to opening a business in the City and County of Denver



Business Assistance Center
201 West Colfax Avenue,
Denver, Colorado 80202
720-913-1999
www.milehigh.com
denverbac@denvergov.org



Welcome to Denver!

Thank you for bringing your business to the City and County of Denver. To help facilitate getting your new business up and running and to expedite the new business approval process, the Offices of Economic Development, Excise and Licensing and Development Services have prepared this general checklist to help guide you through the various city agencies as you embark upon your new venture.

Since it is the responsibility of each new business to complete the needed approvals before it can open, this checklist will help you avoid unnecessary delays. The requirements may vary according to the type of business you intend to start or expand, but the following 11 steps are a good guide to what you will encounter.

1

Plan Your Business

- Pick/develop a marketable business concept
- Identify target market, product or service customer group
- Determine business location
- Develop marketing strategy
- Identify operational needs
- Project start-up expenses
- Create projected financial statements for three business years (worst case, realistic case, best case scenarios)
- Research competition
- Select advisors (consultant/lawyer/CPA)

RESOURCES:

Colorado Business Resource Guide — www.coloradosbdc.org and click on "resources"
Denver Small Business Development Center — www.coloradosbdc.org
Counselor to America's Small Business (SCORE) — www.scoredenver.org
Denver Business Assistance Center — www.denvergov.org/bac

2

Select a Business Site and Determine Zoning and Site Permit Requirements

When selecting a site, it is important to make sure the location is appropriate for your business. Among the factors to consider are the type of building, location, zoning and available parking. Consider working with a licensed contractor with expertise in these areas.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Development Services
201 W. Colfax Ave., Suite 203
Denver, CO 80202
www.denvergov.org/developmentservices
720-865-2790

3

Register Your Business Name and Structure

Search for business name availability and register your business name and structure at:

Colorado Secretary of State
1700 Broadway, Suite 200
Denver, CO 80202
303-894-2200
www.sos.state.co.us

Always consider tax implications and legal liability as you select the business structure that's right for your business. While it is not required, it is recommended that you consult an attorney and/or CPA for advice as to which legal structure (sole proprietor, general partnership, etc.) best suits your needs.

4

Register with Tax Authorities on City, State and Federal Level

Several types of taxes may be levied on businesses including income tax, employment tax, sales tax and city business taxes. Check and register with Denver 's Treasury Division, Colorado Department of Revenue and the U.S. Internal Revenue Service to obtain the necessary tax information for your business.

City: To register for city taxes, file returns and manage tax accounts, visit Denver's eBiz Tax Center at www.denvergov.org/ebiztax.

Denver Treasury Division
201 W. Colfax Ave., Suite 1009
Denver, CO 80202
720-913-9400

State: For state taxes and a Sales Tax ID number, visit the Colorado Business Express website, www.colorado.gov/cbe.

Federal: All forms of legal structure, except sole proprietors with no employees, must obtain a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN). The FEIN is your federal tax ID number. For more federal tax information contact:

Internal Revenue Service
800-829-1040
www.irs.gov

6

Get a Zoning Permit

A zoning permit is always required prior to receiving a building permit for a renovation (if the use in a building or commercial space is different from the previous use or if zoning approval is required for any other permit or license). A pre-application meeting is recommended. For more information, contact:

Development Services
201 W. Colfax Ave., Suite 205
Denver, CO 80202
720-865-3000 (voicemail for zoning questions)
www.denvergov.org/developmentservices

5

Employer Responsibilities

A new set of responsibilities arise when a business hires employees. The business must register as an employer, pay additional taxes, withhold, match and submit employee withholdings, obtain workers' compensation insurance and adhere to employee eligibility regulations. The Colorado Business Resource Guide includes a helpful section on this topic (www.coloradosbdc.org and click on "resources").

Unemployment Insurance Requirement: Visit the Colorado Business Express website, www.colorado.gov/cbe, to register your business with the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment in order to establish an unemployment insurance account.

Report New Hires: Employers are required to report newly-hired employees to the Colorado State Directory of New Hires, www.newhire.state.co.us.

Once you are ready to begin hiring a staff for your business, the Denver Office of Economic Development-Workforce Development can help you find and prescreen qualified applicants at no cost. To learn more about workforce development services, visit the Denver Business Assistance Center or call 720-913-1999.

Denver Business Assistance Center
201 W. Colfax Ave., atrium
Denver, CO 80202
www.denvergov.org/bac

7

Determine the Business Activity Type and Obtain any Special Permits or Licenses

City Licenses & Permits: To determine whether your business activity requires special permits or licenses, please contact:

Denver Excise and Licensing
201 W. Colfax Ave., Suite 206
Denver, CO 80202
Phone: 311
www.denvergov.org/businesslicensing

9

Obtain a Building Permit (if Required)

A building permit is required if:

- There is a change of occupancy, as defined in the Denver Building Code. (If there is a change of occupancy, ADA compliance is required, which may require changes to the building.);
- The customer elects to do interior changes. (All elective work must be done to current building code.)

For more information visit www.denvergov.org/developmentservices.

8

Get Other Approvals and Permits (if Required)

Contact Development Services to find out about:

- A Wastewater Management sewer use and drainage permit may be required, depending on quantity or type of wastewater involved with the new business.
- Department of Environmental Health (DEH) approval is required when food is involved in the business or daycare. DEH approval is also required for swimming pools and spas.
- Fire Department approval may be required.

10

Call for Inspections and Obtain Certificate of Occupancy

A building or zoning inspection may be required prior to opening your business. For more information visit www.denvergov.org/developmentservices.

11

Open Your Business

By completing these steps, you have built a strong foundation that, along with a lot of hard work and a little luck, will enable your business to thrive in the Mile High City!

Denver's Office of Economic Development offers a diverse set of programs and services to assist new and expanding businesses in Denver. From small business financing to employee recruitment, Enterprise Tax Zone Credit assistance and referrals to a wide range of city programs and community resource partners, OED serves as a resource to help businesses succeed in Denver.

Denver Office of Economic Development
201 W. Colfax Ave., Suite 208
Denver, CO 80202
720-913-1999
www.milehigh.com

12

Celebrate Success Good luck in your new endeavor!

